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Fifth Committee**Summary record of the 21st meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 October 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

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Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (continued)

Agenda item 133: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.23: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (continued) (A/56/478; A/C.5/55/46 and Add.1)

1. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while adequate support must be provided for peacekeeping activities, all priority activities of the United Nations, particularly in the area of development, should be given sufficient resources. He agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that the statement on the programme budget implications of the comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations (A/C.5/55/46 and Add.1) should have sought to justify the totality of the request for resources and not just additional requests for posts and non-staff costs, and that the Secretariat should rethink the way it justified resource requests for the support account when the results-based budgeting techniques were used in the next budget submission (A/56/478, paras. 10 and 14).

2. Support-account resources, which were intended to fund backstopping support at Headquarters for peacekeeping operations in the field, should be used only for that purpose and not for activities that came under the programme of work of Secretariat departments that were not directly linked to peacekeeping operations. The number of associated posts must be reviewed regularly to justify the continuing need for them, and the support account should not be used as an opportunity to request resources that were not clearly and specifically related to increased peacekeeping needs.

3. The creation of small units in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to carry out functions for which other departments were primarily responsible must be avoided. In that connection, he shared the Advisory Committee's view that a dedicated public

information unit on peacekeeping should be established not within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, but within the Department of Public Information (A/56/478, para. 32). Likewise, the potential for duplication of work between political officers in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and those in the Department of Political Affairs should be eliminated. There was a need to clarify the relationships between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and offices in the Department of Management that dealt with personnel, financial administration and control, procurement management and monitoring of delegated authority. Adequate resources should be provided for claims processing, and the proposed restructuring of the Field Administration and Logistics Division should expedite the settlement of outstanding uncertified claims.

4. He shared the Advisory Committee's view on the proposed reclassifications (A/56/478, para. 15). Out of the 93 posts approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/238, only 89 had been filled and staff for only 44 had reported for duty. Greater efforts should be made to recruit staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on as wide a geographical basis as possible, taking into account the need for representation of troop-contributing countries in that Department. He welcomed the emphasis on training, planning and the establishment of rosters to improve personnel management in that Department and in the Office of Human Resources Management. Information technology should be used to reduce the recruitment period to less than 180 days. The implementation of the outcome of the negotiations on the Secretary-General's proposals should be kept under review, taking into account the methodological aspects of results-based budgeting and the need to ensure the efficient and effective use of United Nations resources.

5. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) said that the Organization's peacekeeping operations were of the greatest importance and his Government was sparing no efforts to make Egyptian troops available to participate in them.

6. The administrative reform in the field of peacekeeping operations should be comprehensive and balanced so as to address all current shortcomings. It should consider the manner in which the Security Council prepared the mandates for peacekeeping operations and also the participation of troop-contributing countries in preparing, amending and

reviewing those mandates and the tasks involved. The role of the Secretariat in the selection of participating States and in the composition of peacekeeping forces should also be examined. In order to put an end to the chronic financial weakness of the United Nations, all Member States should pay their arrears of contributions and their assessments to the Organization's budgets in full, on time and without conditions. That would enable the Organization to reimburse the amounts owing to the countries that had contributed troops and equipment to peacekeeping operations. The present situation, in which the contributing countries, most of which were developing countries, were paying what was, in his delegation's view, a financial subsidy to the Organization, thereby relieving other Member States of the obligation to bear their share of the financial burden in accordance with the Charter, was unacceptable. There was an urgent need to review the internal rules and methods of work of the Secretariat in order to develop the administrative procedures relating to the participation of States in peacekeeping operations, specifically through the preparation of a memorandum of understanding to improve procedures for the timely reimbursement of States.

7. There were evident failures on the part of the Claims Unit with respect to the handling and settlement of claims. The Secretary-General's proposals would ensure restructuring in that area; his delegation hoped that that would improve the performance of the Unit and make possible the prompt settlement of claims submitted by States that had contributed troops or equipment to peacekeeping operations. There was also a need to reconsider the information in the database for peacekeeping operations pertaining to claims from troop- and equipment-contributing countries, and to include information on the basis of such claims. His delegation had, for example, noticed discrepancies in the amount of claims which had not been explained by the administrative unit responsible for peacekeeping operations.

8. It was necessary to follow the recommendations of the Panel on Peacekeeping Operations regarding the structures proposed for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and for the Department of Political Affairs, as well as for their administrative and financial support. His delegation did not agree in that connection with the recommendations made by ACABQ concerning the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit.

9. The need to maintain the Organization's ability to conduct peacekeeping operations should not mean that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, despite its importance and the wide range of competencies it needed to call on in carrying out its work, should be transformed into a microcosm of the United Nations. Some of the required human and financial resources should be used to support small units within that Department so as to strengthen coordination among the various departments involved in peacekeeping and peace-making activities, including the use of liaison officers.

10. In conclusion, his delegation supported the comments of the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the delays in filling the posts approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session and asked for detailed information concerning those posts and the incumbents appointed to them. He would also like to know to what extent the Secretariat had complied with the resolutions of the General Assembly concerning the representation in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of troop- and equipment-contributing countries.

11. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was strongly committed to improving the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping, in line with the Millennium Declaration.

12. He agreed with the Advisory Committee that resource requests for the support account should be justified in their totality; that greater efforts should be made to clarify the relationships between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and offices in the Department of Management; that decision-making on resource requests for peacekeeping required clear indications of continuing and new functions that entailed additional resources, as well as the reasons why current capacity was inadequate; that the functions of the proposed disarmament and humanitarian affairs posts in the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit were not well defined and would be better placed in the substantive departments concerned; that an analysis must be provided of the effect which additional resources in the Personnel Management and Support Service would have on the processing of applications; and that an effective system was needed to manage and monitor personnel actions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management.

13. The Secretariat should use information technology to reduce the period required for the recruitment of staff from 180 days to 90 days, which would include 60 days for the advertisement of vacancies. The Advisory Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should approve seven additional posts under the regular budget and 122 additional posts under the support account; all requests for new posts must be fully justified.

14. **Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation's approach to the Secretary-General's proposals was based on recent experience in peacekeeping, the emergence of multifaceted missions and the development of the Organization's human and logistical capacity. He regretted that the proposals did not address all the elements analysed by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, particularly the concept of a strategic reserve to enhance the capacity for rapid and effective deployment, but he noted that proposals in that regard would be submitted at the resumed session early in 2002.

15. He supported the proposal for the establishment of a small secretariat for the Executive Committee on Peace and Security; that would strengthen the Organization's analytical capacity and coordinate the efforts of various United Nations departments and agencies in the light of their capabilities and areas of activity. In view of the complexity of peacekeeping reform, he supported the proposal for the establishment, on a temporary basis, of the post of Director of Management within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to help senior officials to solve day-to-day problems in the implementation of reforms to change the management culture in the Department.

16. The efficiency and effectiveness of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit could not be enhanced merely through increased staffing; instead, better use should be made of the Unit's existing capacity to collect, analyse and use information received from other units in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Secretariat and the missions themselves, and coordination within the Secretariat should be improved. He supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations in that regard. The requests for additional resources to strengthen the Military Division and the Civilian Police Division, particularly in areas such as planning, training, analysis

and management, were well founded. However, some of the resources requested had no clear and specific link to the creation and strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

17. The Advisory Committee's analysis of the Secretary-General's proposals (A/56/478) was exceptionally useful and thorough, and would enhance the Fifth Committee's understanding of the substance of and justification for those proposals from the standpoint of the peacekeeping challenges currently faced by the Organization. The Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations were well considered and balanced, and would serve as a good basis for the Fifth Committee's decisions on peacekeeping reform.

18. **Ms. Sun Minqin** (China) said that, in general, the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/55/1024 and Corr.1) supported policies to strengthen the Secretariat's management, planning and mission support capacity. The peacekeeping reform proposals gave priority to the addition of posts and structural improvements in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Her delegation endorsed that approach, and felt that the Fifth Committee should base its discussions on the report of the Special Committee.

19. She hoped that the Secretariat would expedite the submission of a detailed post-by-post justification of its requests for additional staff, as requested by the Special Committee (A/55/1024, para. 83). She shared the views expressed by the Advisory Committee on the presentation of the support account budget estimates (A/56/478, paras. 9 and 10). The use of support-account funds was limited to specific purposes and the level of the support account depended on the level of current peacekeeping activity. Since the additional posts requested under the support account were not clearly and specifically linked to peacekeeping operations, she wondered why regular-budget funding had not been sought for those posts.

20. She hoped that the Special Committee's previous recommendations on enhancing coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other departments would be put into practice. The Special Committee had endorsed the concept of a strategic reserve at the United Nations Logistics Base, but the Secretary-General had not yet submitted a detailed budget proposal in that connection; she hoped that he would do so in the near future.

21. **Mr. Kulyk** (Ukraine) said that, since 1992, Ukraine had contributed troops and equipment to 20 United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Organization's peacekeeping activities, and particularly the Headquarters backstopping function, must be strengthened in view of the increased scope and complexity of those activities. Accordingly, he welcomed the second stage of the implementation of the timely and appropriate recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. The Advisory Committee's report provided a valuable basis for the Fifth Committee's consideration of the proposed resource levels under the regular budget and the support account.

22. Once the additional posts requested had been established, they should be filled expeditiously in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/258, with due regard to the proper representation of troop-contributing countries in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Although that Department and other departments needed additional resources, efforts should also be made to improve working methods and procedures to make optimum use of existing resources. The structural and staffing changes approved by the Committee should reflect the evolving nature of peacekeeping reform and future staffing needs, particularly under the support account, and should be periodically reviewed and adjusted as appropriate.

23. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) said that his delegation, which remained dedicated to improving peacekeeping as a core function of the United Nations, recognized the risks faced by peacekeepers in the field and felt that their welfare was of paramount importance. The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) (the Brahimi report) had provided a road map for reform and had prompted a number of suggestions and discussions in the Fifth Committee. Thanks to the cooperation shown by Member States, the comprehensive approach to reform in that area was proving its worth.

24. His delegation supported the provision of well-targeted additional capacity for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and related departments. In its latest report on the budgetary implications of specific recommendations, the Secretariat had addressed a number of concerns. His delegation believed that Department when it stated that in order

for it to effect change it would require additional support. However, in order to justify any funding request to their capitals, delegations would need to be given more information to substantiate the request.

25. The presentation of the budget could be further improved. Results-based budgeting was crucial if the Committee was to give measured consideration to requests for additional resources. His delegation sought a better understanding of how the new resources would be used, what shortcomings would be addressed and what efforts were being made to optimize the use of existing resources. It welcomed the effort made by the Secretariat to present ideas concerning the strategic reserve at the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi and the consultations with Member States held by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and his staff. Future discussions should be held on rapid deployment planning, including the authority to commit resources before mandates were established.

26. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) said that in 2000 the United Nations had embarked on a historic and thorough examination of its peace and security activities with a view to increasing their effectiveness and that the process now under way would have a profound effect on its future operations in that field. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had issued a series of proposals, conclusions and recommendations, and the Fifth Committee must now consider their budget implications.

27. Argentina had been a major contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and his delegation had taken part actively in the debates in the Special Committee. It supported the Special Committee's conclusions and recommendations, which identified ways of improving the management, planning and support of peacekeeping missions by strengthening coordination both within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and between that Department and other departments, and by improving the collection and analysis of information. The safety of United Nations and associated personnel required special attention. Sufficient support must be given to the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator. The Organization must take up the challenges that it faced as quickly and efficiently as possible, and must see the reform process through by providing the resources required when they were justified before the Fifth Committee.

28. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that the Brahimi report had become a milestone in the reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and that the time had come for the Fifth Committee to take action on the proposals put forward in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/55/1024), which was based on the recommendations in the Brahimi report.

29. The Advisory Committee had issued recommendations on ways to avoid duplication and had expressed the view that the addition of a number of posts or organizational units would not necessarily improve efficiency. It was, however, surprising that the Advisory Committee had recommended against some 40 per cent of the Secretary-General's requests for new posts.

30. His delegation welcomed the emphasis placed on the integration of human rights into the planning and implementation of international peace operations, and supported the establishment of new posts in that area, especially since the number of peacekeeping operations with human rights components was increasing. His delegation felt that it was particularly important to strengthen the Organization's information and analysis capacity, for example by transforming the Lessons Learned Unit into the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, and by providing that Unit with the required posts. It welcomed the emphasis placed on the importance of civilian police in multifunctional peace operations and underscored the need to focus on the reform of the security sector in peace operations.

31. The strengthening of the Civilian Police Division and the establishment of a criminal law and judicial advisory unit warranted support, as did the integration of civilian components into the Military Division. It was disappointing that the Advisory Committee had failed to support the creation of gender adviser posts in the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit.

32. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that there had recently been a surge of interest in ensuring that the required means were available for United Nations peacekeeping activities; the peacekeeping budget had grown to over \$3 billion. It was a source of satisfaction that the United Nations was embarking on a new era of peacekeeping operations, in which it not only maintained a fragile peace while awaiting a negotiated settlement of a conflict, but it became involved earlier so as to avert potential disputes. Such activities were

more complex and extensive, and required greater capacity on the part of the Organization. The report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations pointed clearly to the shortcomings of the current system.

33. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as the core of United Nations peacekeeping operations, must work with the Security Council, with troop-contributing States and in the field, and it needed additional resources to fulfil its numerous tasks as effectively as possible. Its restructuring could make a positive contribution towards controlling the cost of peacekeeping operations. Morocco was taking part in numerous peacekeeping operations and would like the Department to improve its administrative and financial management. As of 26 September 2001, 43 of the 442 posts allotted to the Department remained vacant, yet more resources were already being requested. The recruitment process was excessively slow. The Department must ensure that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/258 were implemented.

34. New posts should be filled on the basis of the widest possible geographical distribution, due attention being paid to candidates from troop-contributing States. Any reorganization of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, such as the establishment of new units, must avoid duplication and overlapping mandates, and must remove the administrative inertia that currently beset the Department. The interaction between that Department and the Department of Management must be improved.

35. The support account for peacekeeping operations was intended to be used to improve the management of peacekeeping operations at Headquarters. The strengthening of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should, *inter alia*, make it possible to improve the financial and administrative services the Department provided for troop-contributing States, for example through the conclusion of memorandums of understanding, letters of assist and certification of claims.

36. His delegation was concerned about the failure to certify claims for equipment damaged in the course of peacekeeping operations, or write-offs. Although it was to be hoped that such situations would not arise in the future, it would be useful to know what provisions applied in such cases. It awaited with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a strategic reserve at the United Nations Logistics Base

in Brindisi, which would be crucial to ensuring the rapid and effective deployment of peacekeeping operations. Lastly, the special attention paid to peacekeeping operations and international security must in no way detract from the Organization's other major fields of action, in particular development.

37. While United Nations peacekeeping operations played an essential role in the maintenance and consolidation of international peace, the settlement of conflicts or crises was first and foremost dependent on the political will to embark on the path of peace and cooperation.

38. **Mr. Bouheddou** (Algeria) said that it was quite clear that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must adapt to the unprecedented increase in the number of complex and diverse tasks assigned to it, and that it required the resources to do so. The Department had to set up and manage several peacekeeping operations at the same time while overseeing a budget of more than \$3 billion and tens of thousands of troops, police officers and civilian personnel in the four corners of the earth.

39. The very purpose of the recommendations in the Brahimi report and the report of the Special Committee was to ensure that it could do that job. To that end, the Organization must provide greater coordination and cohesion among the various participants in peacekeeping operations rather than merely concentrating on increasing the number of administrative units in the Department's organizational chart. As the Advisory Committee noted, the Department's structure must be able to adjust in the light of future experience.

40. His delegation fully subscribed to the position outlined by the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 9 and 10 of its report. The Secretariat should provide information not only on resources additional to the support account, but on all aspects of the support account budget, and should provide an analysis of the workload instead of simply presenting raw workload statistics. The support account must be used only for its mandated purpose, namely, support for the management by Headquarters of peacekeeping operations in the field. It was not acceptable that posts in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and in oversight services should be funded from its resources.

41. While it endorsed the observations made by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 15 of its report, his delegation believed that reclassification was a disguised form of promotion for incumbents, and as such was entirely unacceptable. The lack of transparency in the recruitment, assignment and promotion processes in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was a matter of serious concern, all the more so since the Fifth Committee currently had before it a request for the creation of 129 additional posts in the Department. The 93 posts approved by the General Assembly at the fifty-fifth session had still not all been filled; indeed, as of September 2001, officials had begun working in less than half of those posts. He called on the Secretariat to complete the recruitment of all 93 posts and to provide a list of the candidates already recruited, including information on their nationalities.

42. He regretted that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had been lax in applying rules, regulations and procedures in human resources management. It was for the Office of Human Resources Management to manage and follow up on the recruitment of personnel and to interpret the rules and regulations of the Organization. His delegation had serious reservations about a number of the posts requested, and also about the establishment of new units within the Department. It would follow closely the discussion of the budget implications of such proposals during the Committee's informal consultations.

43. **Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana) said that his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations, particularly its decision to stagger consideration of the proposals relating to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the Brahimi report). It also supported the adoption of the results-based budgeting format for the presentation of the support account estimates, which should sharpen the focus of resource allocation.

44. An integrated management approach to the planning and execution of missions should not necessarily always result in the physical relocation of functional units in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Instead, focal points could be identified within substantive divisions to coordinate those tasks that needed to be functionally integrated. His delegation therefore supported the Advisory Committee's decision not to recommend the setting up

of functional units within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for public information, human rights and gender issues. It would, however, support a recommendation to strengthen existing units within the respective substantive departments.

45. With regard to the estimates of post requirements, his delegation shared the Advisory Committee's view that support account resources were intended primarily to provide additional capacity at Headquarters to manage peacekeeping operations in the field and that the current exercise should therefore not be seen as a general opportunity to request resources that were not clearly and specifically related to the increase in peacekeeping needs. Caution should therefore be exercised in the approval of new posts, especially in light of the difficulty of terminating existing posts. Moreover, posts unrelated to generic peacekeeping activities should be differentiated from those related to specific peacekeeping activities, for which tenure should be firmly linked to time-bound and mission-specific activities.

46. The Secretariat should ensure that all of the additional 93 posts that had been approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/238 were fully encumbered, bearing in mind the letter and spirit of Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter and the concerns that had been expressed about the need for commensurate recruitment into the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of qualified nationals of troop-contributing countries, which were at the forefront of peacekeeping.

47. The changing practice in respect of memorandums of understanding for peacekeeping missions had placed additional responsibilities on troop contributors which, in many instances, were themselves required to mobilize significant resources. His delegation therefore welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the posts which the Secretary-General had proposed for the Finance Management and Support Service should be approved. Ultimately, however, the Organization's financial situation was a major factor in the reimbursement of claims to troop-contributing countries. All Member States should therefore fulfil their obligations in that regard.

48. **Mr. Sharma (Nepal)** said that Nepal, which had lost 42 of its nationals in United Nations peacekeeping operations, recognized the complementary relationship

between peace and development. Peacekeeping was one of the core areas of the Secretariat's work that needed strengthening and reform. While his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to promote reforms in that area, progress had been slow, partial and inadequate and a more comprehensive and conscientious effort was needed.

49. His delegation was disappointed at the slow pace at which the 93 additional posts that the General Assembly had approved for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations were being filled. Furthermore, the Secretary-General had failed to indicate how much of the workload was likely to be alleviated or whether performance would improve when the posts were filled. It would be interesting to know whether, in filling those posts, the principle of geographical representation had been respected and justice had been done to troop-contributing countries.

50. There appeared to be room for far-reaching reforms to eliminate duplication between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management and between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management. Those possibilities should be exhausted, since the mere addition of personnel in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would be of little help, especially over the longer term. Requests for additional posts while a substantial number of vacancies remained unfilled did not provide not provide reassurance that enough was being done to streamline the time-consuming recruitment procedure and maximize efficiency. Instead, the creation of mini-substantive units within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would further increase inter-departmental duplication of work.

51. Turning to the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.23 (A/C.5/55/46 and Add.1), he said it was hard to understand why, despite the Advisory Committee's repeated suggestions, the Secretariat still did not use workload indicators to justify its requests for resources. That failure was inconsistent with the Secretariat's eagerness to embrace results-based budgeting. Reforms should be carried out on the basis of objective analysis and rational justification and not on the basis of expediency and expectations, which had given rise to a wide divergence between the Secretariat's requests, the Advisory Committee's recommendations and what the

Fifth Committee could reasonably approve. His delegation was tempted to conclude that the Secretariat had been overwhelmed by the "safety margin syndrome" commonly found in the United Nations and elsewhere.

52. His delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's cautionary note that the current exercise to implement the recommendations of the Brahimi report should not be seen as a general opportunity for the Secretariat to request resources that were not clearly and specifically related to peacekeeping needs. Such tendencies would be detrimental to the Secretariat's credibility and his delegation would have serious difficulties with requests that were motivated by expediency, personal interests and fuzzy arguments. Efforts must continue to rationalize the use of existing resources and to maximize output through their more efficient use.

53. His delegation was satisfied with the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the Department of Management to equip it to provide adequate backstopping for the current level of peacekeeping operations and its recommendation concerning non-post resources for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It welcomed, in particular, the recommendation that the effect of such changes as might be approved by the General Assembly should be assessed by 2004 to ensure that what had been implemented continued, in both size and structure, to represent the most appropriate response to the peacekeeping needs of the United Nations. Indeed, the periodic assessments should begin at an earlier date.

54. Lastly, developing troop-contributing countries should be adequately represented in the restructured Department of Peacekeeping Operations, particularly at senior levels, so as to reflect their contributions to peacekeeping operations and to ensure the achievement of the Department's objectives.

55. **Ms. Silot Bravo (Cuba)** said that the significant increase in the level of resources allocated for peacekeeping activities reflected the importance which the General Assembly attached to those activities. Her delegation was of the view, however, that there had been no programmatic or operational need for the additional resources which the Assembly had approved in resolution 55/238 for the creation of 93 additional posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

and 2 additional posts in the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs. In practical terms, the additional resources that had been proposed for the regular budget and for the support account placed peacekeeping in a privileged position compared with other equally important development-related activities, which were subject to careful scrutiny and were expected to do more with less. While her delegation recognized the importance of peacekeeping activities, that imbalance should be carefully considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

56. The report of the Advisory Committee contained useful observations, particularly those concerning the need to carry out the reform of peacekeeping activities not only through additional posts and non-staff resources, but also through improved coordination and efficiency. The observations that seemed to call into question the justification for requests for posts in the absence of any visible relationship between the proposals and the increased needs of peacekeeping operations also gave cause for concern. Several of the proposals related to posts that were aimed at increasing the backstopping capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by expanding its management structure, increasing the number of administrative units, duplicating the functions carried out by other departments and creating new and ill-defined functions, all of which tended to underestimate the Department's existing capacities.

57. Her delegation noted with concern that the Secretariat had used the report to request indiscriminately resources that should be considered within the programmatic context, taking into account existing capacities within the Secretariat. She had hoped that, in the context of a results-based management culture and limited resources, the Secretariat's proposals would have been aimed at ensuring a more efficient use of resources. Furthermore, despite the urgency with which the 93 additional posts had been approved for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to date only 44 of them had been filled. She supported an open and in-depth analysis of the proposals for posts, based on merit, as well as the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Assembly should, after a period of time, assess the effect of such changes as it might approve in order to ensure that what had been implemented continued, in both size and structure, to represent the most

appropriate response to the peacekeeping needs of the United Nations.

58. While her delegation shared the view that the promotion of human rights in an area covered by a peacekeeping mission did not necessarily end or decline when the mandate of the mission concerned was terminated, it disagreed with the Advisory Committee's approach that consisted in recommending posts on the basis of general needs, in disregard of the principles governing the operation of the support account and the regular budget.

59. **Mr. Chandra** (India) said that, as a major contributor of troops and equipment, India had always considered peacekeeping to be one of the Organization's core functions. His delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's view that more justification was needed for the totality of resources requested for peacekeeping activities. Vague explanations by the Secretariat were not sufficient. Redeployment and the downward reclassification of posts should form an integral part of the analysis of needs.

60. In the debate on the support account, emphasis should be placed on the more crucial areas of peacekeeping activities, which included the strengthening of the Office of Operations, the Office of Mission Support, the Administrative Support Division, the Logistics Support Division, the Military Division and the Civilian Police Division. Given the nature of the posts that had been approved under the support account, their number and level should be periodically reviewed in order to justify their continued existence.

61. On the subject of the Travel and Vendor Claims Unit, the Secretariat had provided vague explanations the previous May as to why, despite the Assembly's approval, the Unit had not been strengthened. The recommendations of the Board of Auditors that three posts should be transferred to the Field Management and Support Service had also not been heeded. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee's recommendations would in future be fully and promptly implemented by the Secretariat and that there would be greater representation of troop-contributing countries in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

62. **Mr. Blanco Domínguez** (Dominican Republic) said that the divergences noted between the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/55/46 and Add.1) and the recommendations contained in the

report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/478) were a cause of concern. His delegation had serious reservations about the recruitment of additional staff and the reclassification of existing posts. It believed that the strengthening of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be more comprehensive than the measures that had been proposed and that the Department's capacity to respond rapidly and effectively should be improved on a more lasting basis.

63. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) noted with satisfaction the Committee's continuing recognition that the Secretariat must have adequate resources in order to be able to provide support to peacekeeping operations. He wished to assure the members that the Administration would continue to use the resources at its disposal as efficiently and effectively as possible.

64. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had requested the Secretariat to conduct a dialogue with Member States on issues connected with the establishment of a strategic reserve at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. Those consultations had now taken place and the Secretariat was in the process of preparing a paper on the concept, which would be made available to the Advisory Committee early in 2002 and to the Fifth Committee in time for the second part of the resumed fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

65. Regarding the 93 additional posts for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/238, he said that the recruitment process, which had been conducted by the Department in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management, had proceeded with exceptional speed. The views of the Special Committee and the General Assembly concerning proper representation of troop-contributing countries in the Department had been fully taken into account. Since 10 September 2001, a further 22 staff members had come on board. All but a handful of the remaining vacancies would be filled within the next few weeks.

66. The Administration would be using the results-based budgeting format in the presentation of the next support account budget estimates, as mandated by the General Assembly. He trusted that the new format would enhance the quality of future support account budget documents.

Agenda item 126: Human Resources Management
(continued)

Consultants (continued) (A/55/59 and Add.1, A/55/321 and A/55/451; A/56/7 and A/56/16)

Delegation of authority (continued) (A/55/857 and Add.1; A/56/7)

67. **Mr. Li Taizhang** (China) said that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention (A/55/798) had highlighted the rapid ageing of the staff of the United Nations. The Secretariat must take measures to address that serious problem as soon as possible. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of JIU. It also called on the Secretariat to expedite the recruitment of young candidates who had passed the National Competitive Recruitment Examination and to reduce the age-limits beyond which candidates could not take competitive recruitment examinations.

68. Closely related to the problem of the ageing of the staff of the United Nations was the practice of the language services of the Secretariat of hiring large numbers of retirees and temporary personnel. His delegation was not opposed to the appropriate use of qualified retirees and temporary personnel, especially when there were many meetings. It was concerned, however, that some language services were employing persons who were too old and that, in some cases, retirees and temporary personnel outnumbered the regular staff. One consequence of that anomalous situation was the lowering of the quality of interpretation and translation. There was little basis for the argument that the employment of retirees and locally recruited temporary personnel resulted in cost savings. In fact, the failure to utilize young candidates who passed competitive recruitment examinations or underwent specialized United Nations training was in itself wasteful. Currently, there were not sufficient staff to deal with the heavy workload of the language services. That problem should be addressed by increasing the number of regular posts while reducing the number of temporary personnel, taking into account the need to rejuvenate the staff of the United Nations.

69. Lastly, his delegation was concerned that the principle of the equality of the six official languages was not being respected. While Chinese was an official

language of the United Nations, some entities, including the United Nations Development Programme, the International Civil Service Commission and the Commission on Human Rights, did not issue important documentation in Chinese. In addition, the Chinese web site had only one temporary post, the Editorial and Documents Control Section at the United Nations Office at Geneva had never employed a Chinese editor, and the Asia radio unit of the Department of Public Information did not have a P-4 post or a Chinese national on its staff. It was to be hoped that those inequalities would be rectified.

70. **Ms. Sarijalinskaya** (Azerbaijan) said that, while her delegation supported the proposal made at the Committee's previous meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China that the substantive consideration of the current item should be deferred to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, she wished to make a number of points regarding the observations of the Advisory Committee on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of consultants in the United Nations (A/55/59) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/55/59/Add.1).

71. The Advisory Committee had questioned the utility of taking the desirable ranges used for Professional staff financed through the regular budget as a norm for the geographical distribution of consultancy. However, her delegation considered that such a measure would be acceptable on a temporary basis pending adoption by the General Assembly of a methodology for achieving geographical balance in the use of consultants. Her delegation shared the Advisory Committee's concern that a system for accurate data collection, analysis and reporting on consultants and individual contractors had yet to be established. There was a need to expedite the full deployment of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), which would facilitate the creation of an inventory of skills within the Secretariat thus avoiding the unnecessary and wasteful hiring of outside consultants. It would, however, be appropriate to use highly qualified local consultants if that was more cost-effective than the dispatch of experts from the Secretariat. Her delegation considered that the main criteria in selecting consultants should be cost-effectiveness and the quality of the services provided. Greater use of consultants from developing countries

and countries with economies in transition would satisfy both those requirements.

72. **Mr. Farid** (Saudi Arabia), referring to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat and the Secretary-General's comments thereon (A/55/857 and Add.1), said that a system for the delegation of authority required a reliable and comprehensive system of assessment. His delegation believed that performance criteria should be more specific and that performance evaluation should be undertaken in the light of specific objectives.

73. His delegation considered that the authority delegated should be clearly defined in a special document assigning authority to specific staff members and specifying, in particular, the original source of authority, a description of the authority to be delegated with clear objectives, any limitations imposed, including any limitation on sub-delegation, citation of any previous delegations which were to be revised or rescinded, if appropriate, the date on which the delegation was to become effective and a statement of the duration of the delegation.

74. He also supported the creation of an accountability committee which would assist in promoting accountability at higher levels of administrative authority. It was necessary to ensure that there was an effective dialogue between the administration and the staff and that opinions and proposals from staff members were taken into consideration.

75. His delegation also supported recommendation 5 in the JIU report concerning the need to take additional steps towards the establishment, throughout the Secretariat, of a culture of clarity, transparency and communication.

76. Referring to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of consultants in the United Nations (A/55/59), he said that his delegation supported the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit that the Office of Human Resources Management should review all consultancy requests to ascertain whether the required expertise was available "in house". It was also important to ensure an appropriate geographical balance in the employment of consultants.

77. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation supported the proposal made at the Committee's previous meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China regarding the procedure for the consideration of the current item. However, it wished to appeal to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management to ensure that documents and public statements regarding General Assembly resolution 55/258 accurately reflected the negotiating process that had led to the resolution's adoption. The general view was that the Assembly had given a green light to the Secretary-General's proposals for human resources management reform. In fact, delegations had worked hard to reach agreement on some of the measures contained in the package and had had to make compromises in order to satisfy the needs of both Member States and the Secretariat.

78. **Mr. Fedorov** (Russian Federation) expressed regret that a number of matters relating to human resources management had not been considered by the Committee during its deliberations on the current item. The report of the Secretary-General on excessive vacancy rates in language services at some duty stations and issues relating to the recruitment of language staff (A/56/277), for example, had been taken up under item 124, Pattern of conferences. Indeed, it had not even been listed among the documents pertaining to the current item.

79. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Committee was considering only two issues under agenda item 126, namely, the use of consultants and delegation of authority. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat (A/55/857) and the Secretary-General's comments thereon (A/55/857/Add.1) had been considered by the Committee at the fifty-fifth session. On the basis of a recommendation by the Committee, the General Assembly, in its decision 55/481, had endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Unit and decided to consider the observations of the Advisory Committee thereon at its fifty-sixth session. Since the Fifth Committee had now been apprised of the Advisory Committee's views, it should simply call on the Secretary-General to implement the Unit's recommendations, taking fully into account the

observations of the Advisory Committee. Informal consultations on the issue were not necessary. As to the use of consultants, the relevant reports had been considered by the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC), which had supported some of the JIU recommendations while expressing reservations with regard to others. The Advisory Committee, for its part, had provided only observations on the issue. He therefore urged the Fifth Committee simply to endorse the recommendations of CPC and to call on the Secretary-General to take the relevant observations of the Advisory Committee fully into account. His delegation believed that such a course of action would constitute a satisfactory means of disposing of the current item, enabling the Fifth Committee to focus its efforts on the proposed programme budget.

80. **Mr. Tilemans** (Belgium) said that the Committee needed time for reflection before taking any action on the two issues before it.

81. **The Chairman** suggested that the informal consultations should take place as scheduled.

82. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work

83. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) expressed concern that the Committee was to take up in informal consultations that afternoon three parts of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, comprising 14 sections in all. While it was important to use the Committee's time as efficiently as possible, the current programme of work did not give delegations sufficient time to prepare in order to be able to participate effectively in the discussions on the proposed programme budget; that was particularly regrettable since the individual sections were not to be taken up in formal meetings. In future, the programme of work should be more realistic.

84. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau would take those concerns into account.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.